REMARKS

In the Office Action, the Examiner noted that claims 14-26 were pending in the application; allowed claims 14-16 and 18-25; and rejected claims 17 and 26 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e). In rejecting the claims, U.S. Patent 6,548,118 to Russell et al. (Reference A in the September 11, 2003 Office Action) was cited. Claims 14-26 remain in the case. The Examiner's rejections are traversed below.

In rejecting claims 17 and 26, it was asserted that the first demultiplexer recited in claim 17 was disclosed by the mapper 400 in Figs. 4 and 8 as described at column 8, lines 39-45 of Russell et al. However, as illustrated in Fig. 8, and described in column 8, "the mapper receives a continuous bitstream from a plurality of demultiplexed synchronous virtual containers, containing encoded packet data frames in a synchronous channel, which have their boundaries marked by start of data frame and end of data markers" (column 8, lines 41-45). Thus, the input to mapper 400 does not include "overhead information from the STM-N frames" (claim 17, line 3) and therefore the first demultiplexer cannot "remove" (claim 17, line 3) and there is no "removing overhead information from an STM-N signal" (claim 26, line 3) in Figs. 4 or 8. Whatever performs this function in a system that uses "an Ethernet port card comprising a synchronous digital multiplexer" (Russell et al., column 7, lines 19-20) as illustrated in Fig. 4 of Russell et al., it is apparently not part of the card and therefore, Russell et al. does not anticipate claim 17 and the cited portion of Russell et al. does not anticipate claim 26.

Furthermore, it is submitted that at least claim 17 would not be obvious from Russell et al. without citation of additional evidence that it would be obvious to include in the SDH/SONET payload mapper 400 the capability to remove overhead information. It is unlikely that such evidence can be found, because Russell et al. discloses a method for transmission of frame-based-packet-data over an SDH network. In the forming of the SDH signal, the beginning and the end of a packet is identified using a pointer or stuffing technique. This technique is suitable for routers or switches which have a media access control (MAC) processor, because to recognize the beginning and the end of a packet a media access control process is necessary.

A system according to the present invention does not require a MAC processor, because an 8B/10B signal delivered by a router or switch is processed purely on the physical layer. By code conversion a signal is produced which is transmitted fully transparent and at the same time the higher layer or the data link layer and thus, the packet structure are not impaired. Specifically, as recited in claims 17 and 26, in the receiving direction first, the overhead information is removed from the SDM signal in the demultiplexer and the individual VC-4 signals are recovered.

In the demapper, the 1.125 Gbit signal is recovered from the contiguous or virtually concatenated VC-4-8C/VC-4-8V signals. In the case of virtual concatenation, the transit times of the concatenated VC-4 signals are equalized in suitable buffer memories. If the 1.125 Gbit signal was scrambled at the transmitter end, it has to be unscrambled in a descrambler. The second demultiplexer puts out an 8-bit signal, plus information whether data or control information is involved. The 8B/10B encoder that follows produces data encoded according to the coding process established in the IEEE Draft P802.3z at 1.25 Gbit/s.

Such a procedure cannot be learned from Russell et al., particularly from Figs. 4 and 8 and the cited portion of the specification. For the above reasons, withdrawal of the rejection of claims 17 and 26 is respectfully requested.

Entry of Amendment

It is submitted that no additional search will be required by the amendments to claims 17 and 26, since more detailed limitations are recited in other claims. Therefore, entry of this Amendment is respectfully requested.

Summary

It is submitted that Russell et al. does not teach or suggest the features of the present claimed invention as recited in claims 17 and 26. Thus, it is submitted that claims 17 and 26, as well as claims 14-16 and 18-25 are in a condition suitable for allowance. Entry of this Amendment and reconsideration of the claims and an early Notice of Allowance are earnestly solicited.

Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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